

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 EB-11 USIA-15 DRC-01 RSC-01 /045 W

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R 301516Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5019

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 7156

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, CO, VE, BL, PE, EC, CI

SUBJECT: STANDARDIZATION OF COLOR TV PROJECT IN ANDEAN AREA

REF: STATE 164164

1. AS DEPARTMENT KNOWS, WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE NTSC VS PAL/M AND THE FRENCH COLOR TELEVISION SYSTEM HASSLE BEFORE. IN FACT IN A WHIRLWIND DEMONSTRATION OF NTSC SYSTEM NOW ALMOST TWO YEARS AGO WE HAD MOST TELEVISION STATION OWNERS AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF US SYSTEM. HOWEVER, WITH ADVENT OF PRESIDENTIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, A DECISION WAS POSTPONED AND (PARA FIVE REFTEL) THE CUTOFF OF NTSC COLOR TRANSMISSION WAS AT DIRECT ORDER OF PRESIDENT PEREZ WHO HAD NOT MADE UP HIS MIND AS TO WHETHER COLOR TELEVISION WAS SOCIALLY NEEDFUL IN VENEZUELA AT THIS TIME.

2. HOWEVER, TREND IS VERY MUCH IN US FAVOR. WE ESTIMATE THERE ARE NOW APPROXIMATELY 24,000 NTSC COLOR TELEVISION SETS IN THE COUNTRY, MANY OF THEM IMPORTED BY MILITARY AIRCRAFT AND SHIPS FOR BENEFIT OF HIGH OFFICIALS IN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. THERE WAS WIDESPREAD DISAPPOINTMENT AT REFUSAL TO SHOW THE WEST GERMAN FOOTBALL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IN COLOR VIA SATELLITE, AND OUR GUESS IS THAT WITH THE VENEZUELAN DEMAND TO HAVE THE LATEST MODEL OF EVERYTHING, PRESSURE WILL MOUNT ON GOVERNMENT TO PERMIT COLOR BROADCASTS, PROBABLY NTSC BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER

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OF SETS ALREADY IN VENEZUELA.

3. FYI: ONE GAMBIT WHICH I HAVE USED WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE OPERATION AGAINST THE GERMAN SYSTEM IS TO OBSERVE, THAT, IF VENEZUELA SHOULD OPT FOR PAL/M, THE ONLY FOREIGN BROADCAST IT COULD GET DIRECTLY WOULD BE FROM BRAZIL, A COUNTRY TOWARD WHICH VENEZUELA HAS AN UNEASY FEELING. I RECALL THAT IN MY DAYS IN BEIRUT, THE ONLY FOREIGN ARABIC LANGUAGE BROADCAST WHICH THE AVERAGE LEBANESE COULD LISTEN TO WAS THE "VOICE OF THE ARBS" OF GAMAL ABDUL NASSER.

4. IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT WE HAVE ALREADY GONE OVER THE GROUND THOROUGHLY IN VENEZUELA AND SINCE OUR EMBASSY PERSONNEL IS REDUCED THIS SUMMER TO A HANDFUL OF OFFICERS, I DO NOT PROPOSE TO SET UP A TSK FORCE AS SUGGESTED PARA ONE REFTEL. THIS MATTER CAN BEST BE HANDLED AT MY OWN LEVEL AS I MEET WITH VENEZUELAN "DECISION MAKERS" WHO, IN EFFECT, WILL BE ULTIMATELY THE PRESIDENT. MCCLINTOCK

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